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A Tax on a Tax

BY and large, Canadian municipalities raise the bulk of their necessary revenues through taxation. Whether it is police uniforms, office stationery, motor vehicles or fuel for civic institutions they buy, the bulk of the funds comes from civic taxes. To pay federal sales tax at the rate of 10 per cent on a range of literally scores of items on top of their manufactured prices runs the bill that much higher. In objecting to this largely unchanged tax-on-a-tax the Victoria city council is on sound ground. Once before Mayor Scurrah spoke to the point at Ottawa, and he is to renew it on his current visit.

Municipalities pay the 10 per cent sales tax on library records, office and other furnishings, ordinary motor vehicles, garbage cans, the wood used in the manufacture of street-name and traffic-warning signs, clothing, fuel and stores for civic institutions, and the bulk of nearly all purchases made for municipal use. The impost costs small sums on a remarkable array of different items, and they mount up. Library books are now exempt, but recording discs pay the tax. There are anomalies everywhere in the practice.

The Dominion has recognized the unfairness of the incidence of the tax superimposed on some municipal purchases. Bridge steel for Point Ellice bridge was exempted by special arrangement with Ottawa. New fire trucks, fire hose and certain parts of waterworks equipment do not now carry the impost. To the degree that it is operating, this exemption has helped. But what is the difference between a fire truck and any other kind of a truck required by a municipality for civic work? The cost in both instances comes out of the same civic pockets. Where, in short, is there justification for a straight tax on top of a tax in the administration of public affairs?

Beyond the amount of money involved, it is the principle of this impost which is wrong. Municipal purchases should be exempt throughout.

Where the Blame Lies

WHEN Mr. George Gregory said in the Legislature that civil defence was not much better than a farce probably he reflected a lot of ordinary opinion. This is no indictment of civil defence officials, however, who are not to blame for the deficiencies. Within the terms of their reference their plans seem well laid and their interest fully pledged. They are in fact the only persons doing anything about civil defence.

These officials have to contend with indifference from above and public apathy from below. Probably not one person in a thousand could lay hands this moment on the blue-covered booklet issued to all households a year or so ago, nor recall the instructions contained therein for individual safety. There can be no question this apathy stems from an attitude of "What's the use?", and no senior authority on either provincial or federal level has made any marked attempt to create an opposite viewpoint.

Evacuation is the national CD policy and under it the existing organization works to make the best arrangements it can. The idea is not that all might be rescued, but that as many as possible may be protected in a nuclear emergency. If there is not even a can of beans at any relocation centre that must be the fault of governance, not the CD working body, which must make do with the means at its command. Lack of prepared facilities at such centres for housing, sanitation and supply nevertheless helps to create a feeling of unreality about civil defence.

No inspiring lead has ever been given from the top. If civil defence is worthwhile it should impel as much interest as a provincial or national budget or the acceptance or rejection of an Arrow program. None of these would mean anything if a civil population was wiped out, yet nothing exists to indicate a priority urge towards civil defence measures. People take their cue from their leaders, and on neither the federal nor the provincial level do cabinet ministers seem over concerned about civil defence. It is in this atmosphere of disinterest that the CD organization has to make its way, and a discouraging task it must be.

Right Man for the Job

DWELLERS on the Gulf Islands as well as the boating enthusiasts who make those waters their summer playground have a lot to thank Recreation and Conservation Minister Westwood for. In the comparatively short time he has held office the former mayor of Nanaimo has accomplished or influenced an impressive number of improvements in tidewater travel facilities which, while of direct benefit to certain identifiable and relatively small groups, also materially help the development of the province as a whole.

Because it has had to be gradual the new pattern of car-and-passenger ferry connections has been accepted without much comment, but the advancement in service has been rapid nonetheless. One has only to look at the network of scheduled ferry connections today to appreciate how greatly facilities have been improved and expanded from what they were only a few years ago. Inauguration this week of the important new service between Chemainus and Thetis Island marked the latest addition to the provincial ferry system, and speakers for the government during the ceremonies hinted at the early establishment of other useful links.

This continuing program of development of water communications shows the value of having in the cabinet a minister who "knows the score" and knows it intimately. Although Mr. Westwood is not the minister in charge of provincial ferries, his knowledge of the region and its requirements must have helped cabinet decisions, and there can be little doubt that his influence in the right quarters has contributed to many of them.

Directly under Mr. Westwood also is the more recent program of acquiring and developing resorts and anchorages for thousands upon thousands of pleasure craft cruising these waters every summer from early May until the end of September. The wisdom of that policy, which already has produced some excellent results, will become more and more obvious as the years go by.

Interpreting the News

Common Market Vistas

By PHIL NEWSOM
UPI Foreign News Editor

FRANKFURT (UPI) — The West German manufacturer remarked with a wry grin: "It may be we'll do with the mark what we couldn't do with the panzers."

In two world wars, Germany failed to conquer France.

What the manufacturer meant was that the Germans might do it now in peacetime with money. It was one of those exaggerated remarks which hold a kernel of truth.

Germany is in the Common Market which knocked down tariff barriers and was designed to encourage free trade among Germany, France, Italy, Belgium, The Netherlands and Luxembourg. For internal Germany, the Common Market which came into being at the end of last year had practically no immediate effect at all.

In 1957 the Germans had, all by themselves, lowered tariff barriers 25 per cent, meaning that scarcely any change was necessary when the Common Market came into being.

On the other hand, it did mean that both France and Italy had to make substantial changes.

Last year, for example, France permitted less than $3,000,000 worth of German automobiles to be imported into France, and permitted altogether from all Common Market countries only about $5,000,000 worth.

Under the Common Market agreement, France must open her markets to more than $40,000,000 worth of foreign automobile imports.

Automobiles are the outstanding example, but there are other important markets, too, previously limited to quota restrictions which now will be open to German manufacturers.

Meanwhile, as France moved toward convertibility of the franc, it was necessary that other countries give her help in guaranteeing that the franc would remain stable. One of the guarantors was West Germany, in a $60,000,000 stand-by credit.

Entering into the French economic picture also are the anticipated heavy investments of West German money in French projects in Sahara Desert development.

The German economy continues to boom, but it is not all rosy.

In the steel industry, the French hold at least a temporary advantage. After the devaluation of the franc, French steel sells for from nine to 15 per cent less than comparable German products.

"Go ahead—Be witty"

Thinking Aloud

". . . of shoes—and ships—and sealing wax—of cabbages and kings."

By TOM TAYLOR

A WRITER in Maclean's deplores the development of any sentiment in Canada for a national anthem. I should imagine that two years' residence in this country scarcely makes him an expert on the subject, but that is by the way.

His main argument is that anthems breed nationalism and that since what the world needs is world government this is a bad thing. Maybe it is but it won't be eradicated unless human beings become some other kind of being.

It's true as he says that national anthems may contain pompous and boastful words but words slide off the tongues of singers like bad comics do off the minds of children. The word meaning of the lyric is secondary to the evocation of feeling.

That may comprise loyalty and love, virtues that are not a bad thing even in 1959 AD. It will be a sad and nebulous world if ever these sentiment disappear.

* * *

A national anthem, like a national flag, can also be a badge of identity. When the Canadians won the hockey championship at Prague last Sunday a band struck up "O Canada." Someone outside the stadium might not have known what was going on but hearing "O Canada" he would certainly guess it had something to do with this country. And if he didn't recognize the tune someone else would tell him.

An anthem or a flag, therefore, can be likened to a personal name, and it would be hard to find fault with people for having names.

The spirit of nationalism is very much abroad these days, especially among nations that now feel they should be masters in their own house. The Maclean's writer sees nationalism as a sinister disease, more dangerous than communism. If that is so the human race has always had this disease and I am afraid there is no cure.

What is nationalism anyway? It is group loyalty to the country of one's birth or adoption. In the abstract a world where all live lovey-dovey together under one central authority might loom as an ideal state of affairs, but people are not ideal and likely enough never will be.

While hoping they will keep on improving we can't ignore their basic make-up.

* * *

Group feeling, group companionship, group loyalties—these are part and parcel of the fabric of humankind. Family relationship, for instance is the first manifestation of "nationalism;" the protective pride and love that centres in kinship. The pyramid of association rises into the natural groupings that follow. Clubs, trade unions, societies of all kinds, military units, schools, towns, sporting teams—all these and a thousand other formations reflect the same instinctive bent of man. Such groupings generate a common loyalty to some aim or object.

Nationalism is precisely the same expression on a national scale.

Some of these groupings have flags and songs of their own, but when they wave the flag or sing the song it isn't necessarily a red rag to a bull. Families live peaceably with their neighbors although prompted by separate loyalties. Nations will have to learn to do the same thing.

In a footnote to the Maclean's article it says the writer claims descent from Hereward the Wake. That must be a legitimate loyalty in which he takes pride. He can hardly then blame other people or nations for also having a leaning towards loyalty and pride.

Gerald Waring

Reports from Ottawa

IS Canada reneging on its Colombo Plan commitments, and in effect sabotaging this program for Asian economic development, by giving away wheat instead of capital goods?

In Ottawa some government officials agree that this is the case.

"The Colombo Plan is no longer geared to the needs of the recipient countries, but rather to our own needs," one of them asserted. "It is no longer meant to help others help themselves, but to help us get rid of our wheat."

Other government officials disagree. They assert that these Asian countries have to import food, and that they are short of both dollars and sterling. Free wheat from Canada means they can use what foreign exchange they have to buy capital goods, these officials argue.

"Functionally," one of them said, "wheat going into Pakistan and India fulfills the same purpose as foreign exchange."

* * *

Whatever the correct answer—and there's probably considerable truth in both points of view—the fact remains that Canada is paying off its international obligations largely in surplus wheat at a time when countries like India and Pakistan need cash or capital goods.

And what's more, responsible officials state, any emergency assistance additional to Colombo Plan aid which Canada may agree to give this year will almost certainly be more wheat or flour.

The former government had provided $35,000,000 a year for capital assistance to Asian countries under the Colombo Plan. As a member of the Conservative opposition, John Diefenbaker had demanded that Canada's contribution be sharply increased.

As prime minister, Diefenbaker increased the amount to $50,000,000 last spring. But if you subtract the part of this $50,000,000 which is being spent on wheat and flour, net Canadian capital aid to our Commonwealth partners under the Colombo Plan has actually decreased.

In the fiscal year 1957-58, during which the Conservatives were in office for more than nine months, $26,000,000 of the $35,000,000 Colombo Plan vote went for capital purposes, and $9,000,000 went to provide the Indians, Pakistanis and others with surplus Canadian wheat. In fiscal 1958-59, now drawing to a close, a little more than $25,000,000, or just over half of the total appropriation, is paying for wheat shipped to Asia. That leaves less than $25,000,000 for capital aid compared with $26,000,000 a year ago.

Atop of this Colombo Plan wheat the government gave India, Pakistan and Ceylon an additional $15,000,000 worth of wheat and flour in 1958. It also sold $35,000,000 worth of wheat to India and Ceylon on long term credit. This, I am told, will be the pattern for any aid in 1959 extra to the Colombo Plan.

* * *

"The bulk of Canada's aid under the Colombo Plan has been and should be concentrated in Commonwealth countries," Finance Minister Fleming told the Commons last week.

A few days earlier, Pakistani Finance Minister Mohammet Shoaib called on Fleming, while en route to Washington on a dollars quest. Shoaib reported on his country's financial position, which a responsible Washington writer has described as "skirting the ragged edge of insolvency." Meanwhile an Indian delegation is in Washington, seeking U.S. dollars to bolster India's near-bankrupt five-year-plan.

Some extra Canadian dollars would certainly be welcome in Karachi and New Delhi, but there is no sign of any forthcoming. Only wheat.

The Packsack

Of GREGORY CLARK

A hotel owner of my acquaintance grew dissatisfied with the management of his dining rooms, coffee shops and snack rooms of which he boasted five under the one roof. He figured they weren't making enough money, for one thing; and it seemed to him they were too full of old easy-going waitresses and waiters, hostesses, countermen and clumsy bus boys. There wasn't enough snap about them. Too many guests appeared to be lined up, waiting for a table.

So, in one of those tantrums to which nearly all head men are sometimes given, he fired the management and hired a young fellow from far away who was reputed to be a wizard of the restaurant end of the business.

The change was immediate and electrifying. Waitresses, young and vigorous, began whirling about in all directions; hostesses sprang crisply; counter men flipped, whisked, sliced, ladled; bus boys whizzed; erect captains stalked about, eagle-eyed; half the old customers went elsewhere; new customers didn't turn up in sufficient numbers to balance the account; the place was losing money instead of not making enough, which is quite a different thing.

So they hired back the old manager and all the slow-poke waiters and waitresses and the odd-ball bus boys and the stumbly old captains and the motherly hostesses; and all the old customers came back, and it as as hard as ever to get in. It still isn't making enough money. But it has got a thing called character—a thing that isn't ever expected to make enough money.

Fun, Fact and Fiction

A famous psychiatrist conducting a university course in psychopathology was asked by a student: "Doctor, you've told us about the abnormal person and his behavior—but what about the normal person?"

"When we find him," replied the psychiatrist, "we cure him."

* * *

Time was—and not so long ago—when a whole war could be conducted for what one atomic submarine costs today.

* * *

The bright pupil looked long and thoughtfully at the second examination question, which read: "State the number of tons of coal shipped out of Canada in any given year."

Then his brow cleared and he wrote: "1492—none."

Washington Angle

Harsh Justice

By DAVID LAWRENCE

IN these days, when there is so much talk about upholding the constitution, it seems strange that the "civil rights" of an indivdual can be wiped out overnight and he can be sent to jail for 15 months, not because he violated any law or was himself guilty of criminal conduct but because he was afraid to testify in a case lest he suffer gangster reprisals.

Yet, by a vote of 5 to 4, the Supreme Court of the United States now orders to jail a man who is innocent of any crime against his fellow man.

The four who voted in dissent were Chief Justice Warren and Justices Black, Douglas and Brennan. Their written opinion is a masterpiece of logic and sound law.

The viewpoint they expressed last week on the right of an innocent man to be spared unusual punishment because of his refusal to testify before a grand jury is an excellent exposition of judicial morality. It is a denunciation of the arbitrary way that criminal contempt cases can be handled by tyrannical judges.

* * *

The constitution says that "the trial of all crimes, except in cases of impeachment, shall be by jury." But usage, based on the English common law, has caused the constitution to be ignored. Justice Black, in an historic opinion a few years ago, made an impressive argument for jury trials in criminal contempt cases. Senator Talmadge of Georgia has introduced legislation at the present session of Congress to require jury trials in all cases of contempt arising from the disobedience of any injunction or restraining order.

What was involved, however, in the case of Emanuel Brown was not a restraining order or injunction but the court's oral command that he testify before a grand jury. He had already refused to do so, and was brought into court so that he could again be requested to testify and then punished.

* * *

The minority opinion deplores this as a violation of the federal rules of criminal procedure and expresses a belief that the punishment was rather severe for the kind of offence charged. It gives a list of other cases with far less drastic penalties. The chief justice also says:

"The prosecutor indicated to the court that the inquiry (of the grand jury) though directed toward minor violations of the Interstate Commerce Act, was really part of an effort to discover facts concerning notorious gangsters suspected of complicity in the Victor Reisel acid-throwing incident and general racketeerng in the southern district of New York. In view of the total absence of any intimation that petitioner (Emanuel Brown) had violated the Interstate Commerce Act or was himself guilty of criminal conduct, the actual basis for his refusal to testify may well have been fear of gangster reprisals, a not unreasonable fear in such circumstances. Regardless of the legal significance of such a defence, a hearing would have provided an opportunity for presentation of such facts to the judge and might well have affected the length of sentence."

* * *

The chief justice quoted aptly from a pertinent opinion by Justice Frankfurter in another case. Had Mr. Frankfurter held the same view today, he would have supplied the fifth vote toward making the Warren opinion the majority. But the record now is made, and judges throughout the country are bound by the precedent created. The chief justice quite properly laments this as he writes of what has been the custom in the past:

"In the light of the sentences given in this type of case, I doubt if any judge in the federal system would summarily send a witness to the penitentiary for 15 months for merely refusing to testify in a grand jury investigation of whether a trucker is operating without an interstate commerce commission certificate. It is quite obvious that much of the sentence was for some reason collateral to that investigation. It is not sufficient for the purpose of increasing punishment to act on the suspicion that the refusal of a witness to testify may rebound to the interest of a racketeer, and on that basis deny him the protection that Congress has seen fit to accord all witnesses before grand juries. If such factors are to play a part in the sentence the witness is entitled to a hearing on notice."

* * *

The chief justice has put his finger on the procedural weaknesses in criminal contempt cases. The opportunity is too often denied a citizen to present evidence and argument through his attorney on the concrete issues that may otherwise influence a judge arbitrarily to impose drastic punishment for a minor offence. Instead of a jury of 12 men, a single judge can summarily punish, and apparently a supreme court majority will back him up.